



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

NEW EXHIBIT

The Kentucky Murals of Frank W. Long

Berea, Louisville, Lexington, and Morehead

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BEREA, Ky. A new lobby exhibit, "Kentucky Murals by Frank W. Long" has opened at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, where it will be on display through April 18, 2015. The exhibit showcases the 14 Depression-era murals painted for Kentucky buildings by artist Frank Weathers Long and includes photographs and information about the artist. Long's murals can still be seen in public buildings in Berea, Louisville, Lexington, and Morehead.

A native of Knoxville, Tennessee, Long studied painting at the Art Institute of Chicago (1925-1927), and then at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia (1927-1928). He studied art at the Academie Julian in Paris, France until the Depression brought him back to the U.S. In need of work, he moved to Kentucky to assist his father, a well known painter who was completing decorative paintings for a Lexington movie house.



Long never intended to become a muralist, but while in Lexington, he was contacted by Edward Rannells, whom he had met at the Art Institute of Chicago and who was now chair of the art department at the University of Kentucky. Long was hired to paint two 10.5-foot high murals at UK's new Margaret I. King Library. An assistant Long was teaching to paint knew of a vacant studio with high ceilings and skylights located in Berea, so Long set up his painting studio there.

Portrait of Frank Weathers Long by Doris Ulmann, University of Oregon photo archives

From 1933 to 1942, Frank W. Long painted murals for federal buildings in Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Oklahoma and Maryland in this studio in the Berea Bank and Trust Building in downtown Berea.



Funding for these mural commissions came from the Treasury Relief Art Project, which operated under the U. S. Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts. "The Section" selected artists to embellish new and existing federal and public buildings with art that depicted United States history and culture.

Murals featured in the exhibit are located in four Kentucky cities. "Rural Life in Kentucky: Work and Play," comprises two murals installed in the Margaret I. King Library at the University of Kentucky. Ten very large murals are included in the 1932 U.S. Post Office, now the Gene Snyder U. S. Courthouse and Custom House in Louisville. Long worked on this commission from 1935-1937, designing imagery that reflected the industry and commerce of the region and depicting the postal delivery service.

Mural titled "Rural Life in Kentucky: Work," by Frank W. Long, in the Margaret I. King Library, Special Collections Research Center, University of Kentucky. *Photo credit: Mary S. Rezný*



Photo top: Mural titled "Stock Farming" by Frank W. Long in the Gene Snyder U.S. Courthouse and Custom House, Louisville.

Photo credit: Carol M. Highsmith Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Photo bottom: Mural titled "Ohio River Traffic" by Frank W. Long in the Gene Snyder U.S. Courthouse and Custom House, Louisville.

Photo credit: Carol M. Highsmith Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Another commissioned mural completed in 1939, is titled, "Rural Free Delivery" and was painted in Morehead's U. S. Post Office building, which has since become the Morehead police and municipal building. It is painted on a chalk ground to emulate a true fresco.

Long's last Kentucky mural was designed for Berea's U.S. Post office, now the city's police and municipal building. For this building he designed a tribute to Berea and Berea College titled "Berea Commencement in the Old Days." The mural depicts an early 20th-century college commencement celebration with people gathered for the event, arriving by foot, on horseback and by wagon. The mural even includes a corner portrait of Long's friend John Jacob Niles playing on an Appalachian dulcimer. Since Long's studio was in Berea, he was able to paint this mural on the site. Unlike his other murals, which were painted in oil on canvas, his Berea mural was painted with egg tempera directly onto the plaster wall.



"Berea Commencement in the Old Days," 1940, by Frank W. Long, Berea's police and municipal building

Photo: Berea Public Art Tour, Berea College and the City of Berea

In 1942 Long left Kentucky to serve in the Army during World War II. After the war, he learned jewelry and lapidary arts. He was a juried member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild and the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen with his silver and gemstone jewelry, and his Berea mural was his last.

Images of all of Long's Kentucky murals are included in this exhibit and can be seen on site throughout the state at:

Lexington - 2 murals

Margaret I. King Library, Special Collections Research Center, University of Kentucky Campus
Open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 859-257-8611; e-mail: SCLref@Lsv.uky.edu
to make an appointment.

Louisville – 10 murals

Gene Snyder U.S. Courthouse and Custom House, 601 West Broadway
Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Morehead – 1 mural

Morehead Police and Municipal Building, 700 West First Street
Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Berea – 1 mural

Berea Police and Municipal Building, 212 Chestnut Street
Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The Kentucky Murals of Frank W. Long" will be on display at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea through April 18. The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea, Exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 700 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. For more information about the center's events call 859-985-5448, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentucky.artisan.center, or go to the center's website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.